

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR CALLS ON MINISTER OF EDUCATION

REF: PRAGUE 2176

1. WE WOULD AGREE WITH CZECHOSLOVAK DESIRE, AS EXPRESSED BY MINISTER OF EDUCATION VONDRUSKA, TO EXPAND EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGES WITH THE U.S. ON A STEP-BY-STEP BASIS, PARTICULARLY BY BUILDING ON THE IREX PROGRAM. WE WOULD HOPE, HOWEVER, THAT HIS STATEMENT ABOUT CURRENT EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE TALKS RATIFYING THE IREX PROGRAM DOES NOT INDICATE CZECHOSLOVAK INTENTION TO GIVE IREX PROGRAM OFFICIAL STATUS UNDER THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT.

2. AS EMBASSY AWARE, IREX PROGRAM IN EASTERN EUROPE IS PRIVATE. WHILE CU GRANT-IN-AID FUNDS TO IREX ARE USED TO FUND IREX CZECHOSLOVAK SCHOLARS IN THE U.S., THE IREX PROGRAM IS NOT SUBJECT TO BFS SUPERVISION. IREX, AS INDEPENDENT SCHOLARLY ORGANIZATION, IS NOT SUBJECT TO DEPARTMENT

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POLICY GUIDANCE IN ITS EASTERN EUROPEAN EXCHANGES, AND WE

WISH TO RESIST EFFORTS TO GIVE ITS PROGRAM OFFICIAL STATUS UNDER THE AGREEMENT. FURTHERMORE, MENTION OF IREX IN THE AGREEMENT WOULD ESTABLISH PRECEDENT FOR LISTING OTHER

PRIVATE EXCHANGES WITH THE U.S. WHICH MAY DEVELOP IN FUTURE YEARS. DEPARTMENT ENCOURAGES PRIVATE EXCHANGES WITH EE COUNTRIES BUT WE CANNOT BE PUT IN POSITION OF HAVING TO GIVE OUR STAMP OF APPROVAL TO EACH PROGRAM. CZECHOSLOVAKS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CONDUCT EXCHANGES WITH IREX AND ITS PREDECESSOR ORGANIZATION, IUCTG SINCE EARLY 1960'S WITHOUT AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT, AND THEY SHOULD BE ABLE TO CONTINUE THIS PRACTICE IF THEY FIND THE IREX EXCHANGES USEFUL.

3. FYI SOVIETS HAVE ALSO ASKED TO INCLUDE NEWLY DEVELOPING PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGES IN THE PROGRAM OF EXCHANGES FOR 1977-79 TO BE NEGOTIATED THIS FALL. WE ARE TAKING THE SAME POSITION WITH THE SOVIETS AND OTHER EE COUNTRIES, I.E. WE ENCOURAGE PRIVATE EXCHANGES AND IN SOME CASES SUPPORT THEM FINANCIALLY, BUT WE CANNOT ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEM UNDER THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT. THE IREX PROGRAM IN THE USSR, BY CONTRAST, IS THE OFFICIAL USG PROGRAM UNDER THE US-USSR EXCHANGE AGREEMENT.
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